

Religions and Cultures for Peace and Harmony

His Eminence, Oswald Cardinal Gracias

The Present World and National Scenario that affects peace and harmony:

We are living in challenging times. Our epoch is characterized by amazing advances in technology on the one hand and conditions of extreme socio-economic retrogression and distress on the other.¹ The widening gap between the rich and the poor is causing instability in the economy and hence having a host of negative repercussions on the poor people in our country.

The recently concluded 2009 G8 Summit held in July 2009 in L'Aquila, Italy had as its main challenges - a response to the global economic and financial crisis, food security and safety, access to drinking water, the struggle against climate changes and the world leaders' commitment to combating the causes of poverty and of underdevelopment.² In this regard, international cooperation must contribute to progress in the overall development of the person and of society, that is, to a development that concerns not only the economic aspect but involves every dimension of human life. Only such type of cooperation will promote *stability and peace*. When a people's deepest aspirations are unfulfilled, the consequences can be disastrous.³

In the recent Union Budget for India 2009-10, the Finance Minister, aware of the great challenges to the Indian economy caused by the economic slowdown, was nevertheless determined to do his best for the nation. He has allocated sizeable funds to Brihan Mumbai Storm Water Drainage Project (BRIMSTOWA), agricultural development, debt relief for farmers, empowerment of the weaker sections of society and a loan scheme to enable students from economically weaker sections to access higher education. A noteworthy feature of the Budget is the National Food Security Act which would ensure that every family living below the poverty line in rural or urban areas will be entitled by law to 25 kilos of rice or wheat per month at Rs.3 a kilo.

It is obvious that it is not the task of *religious leaders* to find technical solutions to the problems of the modern economy and international cooperation. Nonetheless, they have a great responsibility in social life. Pope John Paul II urged religious leaders to be society's conscience, recalling the ethical principles to be considered when making concrete choices, by appealing to respect for true human values, such as respect for life, human dignity and honesty. The Pope pointed out that it is also the duty of religious leaders to speak on behalf

of those who are the weakest, the most deprived, who cannot make their voice heard. Concern for the most underprivileged is not the responsibility of the public authorities alone; it must also be everyone's concern.⁴ The advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural and even economic growth of all humanity.⁵

India is a pluralistic country comprising of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural features. India's cradle of religions includes Hinduism (80.5%), Islam (13.4%), Christianity (2.3%), and Judaism (0.6%). It has also many spiritual traditions such as Sikhism (1.9%), Buddhism (0.8%), Jainism (0.4%) and Zoroastrianism⁶ The simultaneous presence of these great religions and traditions are a source of enrichment for Indian society. The Church has the deepest respect for these traditions and seeks to engage in sincere dialogue with their followers.⁷ It was the strong conviction of Pope John Paul II that the various religions will have a permanent role in the preserving of peace and in building a society worthy of man.⁸ This is especially true for India, where on the one hand the religious spirit is so strong and on the other hand there is so much of communal violence.

The world's great religions, need to work together to eliminate the social and cultural causes of terrorism. One crucial issue that has been gripping the attention of the world and has also left a deep scar on the face of our country, and on our city of Mumbai, is the upsurge in terrorism. Terrorism is a major challenge to civilized society today, and in the words of the *Compendium* on the Social Doctrine of the Church, it is "traumatizing the international community."⁹ It has a wide range of social, economic and political causes, and its consequences are terrible, as we have all witnessed in recent months. We must now take the lead in publicly condemning terrorism and in denying terrorists any form of religious or moral legitimacy.¹⁰ Religious leaders of all religions have a grave responsibility today – to teach the dignity of every person and the clear sense of the oneness of the human family.

Religious fundamentalism poses a threat to the secular fabric and stability of the country. It knows no borders and is a common enemy of humanity. Many years ago, India's First Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru remarked: While on the one hand, we the people of India are bound together by strong bonds of culture, common objectives, friendship and affection, on the other hand, unfortunately, there are inherent in India, separatist and disruptive tendencies ... which made India suffer in the past. In preserving its unity, India needs to ... fight communalism, provincialism, separatism, stateism and casteism.¹¹ Unfortunately today there has been an increase in communal riots, communal violence and ethnic conflicts due to fundamentalism and ethnic nationalism.¹² Such fundamentalism which

is based on religious and political motivations allows fundamentalism to exert a tremendous influence on the public policies of India.¹³

The anti-Christian violence in Orissa and other parts of the country is one of the saddest moments in the history of India. About sixty thousand Christians had to flee their own villages after the fundamentalist groups attacked their houses and places of worship in August 2008. The Christian community has lost many of its personnel and its one of the consecrated women has been publicly humiliated during the anti-Christian violence. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) welcomed the judgment of the Supreme Court to protect minorities of the country, particularly these Christians who have been targeted by some anti-social elements.¹⁴ The country needs to restore its glorious multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-linguistic tradition.¹⁵ "Inter religious meetings between peoples of different religions will be one of the ways of seeking harmony, dialogue at all levels, in communities, societies, in schools and institutes of higher learning. India has to regain its pristine glory of being a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-lingual nation with values of peace and harmony, understanding and tolerance."¹⁶

Urgent need for inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue in a world that is becoming increasingly multicultural and multireligious.

In order to establish peace and harmony, it is important to understand religions and cultures. Study, reflection and constant interaction with believers of different cultures and religions can facilitate initiatives that promote peace and harmony. In India, there is an intricate mosaic of cultures, depicting our unity in diversity. India's cultural diversity has evolved over centuries, through a process of assimilation and amalgamation of the diverse cultural influences.

In India, various cultural groups and communities are influencing each others ways of life, customs, practices and beliefs. If one culture seeks to dominate or impose itself on others, it will lead to conflict and violence in that society. Further, cultures and religions can collide.¹⁷ Following the Second Vatican Council, the Church has been inviting all Catholics to a dialogue in an attempt to acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral values found in other religions, in society and in culture.¹⁸

The Church makes the Gospel incarnate and alive in different cultures. The Church encounters different cultures and becomes involved in the process of inculturation.¹⁹ "It brings a prophetic challenge to every culture to remove negative features and all such elements that oppose justice and make life less meaningful. This process of inculturation

has been a characteristic feature of the tribals in India. The Church has helped the tribals especially in Chotanagpur and Northeast India to find a new identity and to get adjusted to modern life, confronted with fast social changes”.²⁰

Thus, through inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community.²¹ She transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within.²² Through inculturation the Church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission. In the dialogue with cultures we have to be sensitive to the differences between cultures and need to have a greater understanding of the different cultures. Recognising the difference in language, we should speak to each other with a universal language, the language of love.

Hence, it is imperative to promote strong bonds of solidarity, based on dialogue, between people of different cultures and religions. At the closure of the Great Jubilee celebrations, Pope John Paul II stated: “In the climate of increased cultural and religious pluralism which is expected to mark the society of the new millennium, it is obvious that *interreligious* dialogue will be especially important in establishing a sure basis for peace and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which have so often bloodied human history”.²³ Hence, Pope Benedict XVI has made dialogue between the Catholic Church and other religions in Asia one of the priorities of his pontificate.²⁴

Church’s Commitment to Dialogue:

The Catholic Church is fully committed in pursuing the path of dialogue and cooperation with people of other religions. Interreligious dialogue is an important means by which the followers of the various religions discover shared points of contact in the spiritual life, while acknowledging the differences which exist between them. At the inauguration of his Pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI clearly affirmed that “the Church wants to continue building bridges of friendship with the followers of all religions, in order to seek the true good of every person and of society as a whole”.²⁵

Deep Esteem of Vatican II for Other Religions:

In *Redemptor Hominis*, Pope John Paul II spoke of the deep esteem the Second Vatican Council had shown for the great spiritual values enshrined in other religions, “which in the life of mankind finds expression... in morality, with direct effects on the whole of culture. The Fathers of the Church rightly saw in the various religions as it were so many reflections

of the one truth, “seeds of the Word”²⁶, attesting that, though the routes taken may be different, there is but a single goal to which is directed the deepest aspiration of the human spirit as expressed in its quest for God and ... for the full meaning of human life”.²⁷

For John Paul II the Second Vatican Council was a providential preparation for the Third Millennium. In his letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, inviting the Church to prepare for the Great Jubilee which was to usher in this millennium, Pope John Paul II reflected on the Church’s rediscovery of her own identity and on the call to renewal which this entailed. “On the basis of this profound renewal, he stated, the Council opened itself to Christians of other denominations, to the followers of other religions, and to all the people of our time.”

A Continuing Dialogue of Life:

Pope John Paul II spoke eloquently of the *dialogue of life* on his historic visit to the Umayyad Great Mosque of Damascus on May 6, 2001: Interreligious dialogue is effective when it springs from the experience of “living with each other” from day to day within the same community and culture. In Syria, Christians and Muslims have lived side by side for centuries, and *a rich dialogue of life* has gone on unceasingly... The positive experiences must strengthen our communities in the hope of peace; and the negative experiences should not be allowed to undermine that hope.²⁸

It is our hope that through a continuing “*dialogue of life*” all believers will cooperate willingly in order to defend and promote moral values, social justice, liberty and peace.²⁹ “*Caritas Christi urget nos*” (2 Cor 5:14). It is the love of Christ which impels the Church to reach out to every human being without distinction, beyond the borders of the visible Church. These were the recent words of Pope Benedict XVI to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the conclusion of its Tenth Plenary Assembly.³⁰ The source of the Church’s mission is Divine Love, revealed in Christ and made present through the action of the Holy Spirit. All the Church’s activities are to be imbued with love.³¹ Thus, it is love that urges every believer to listen to others and seek areas of collaboration. Helping the sick, bringing relief to the victims of natural disasters or violence and caring for the aged and the poor are some of the areas in which people of different religions can collaborate with one another for *a dialogue of life*.

In 1986 in New Delhi, during his first visit to India, Pope John Paul II walked as a pilgrim to Raj Ghat, a civil and religious shrine to Mahatma Gandhi.³² For long moments he knelt down in silent prayer and then rose to speak in praise of the “apostle of non-violence”. And while

speaking to Hindu leaders in Madras on February 5, 1986, Pope John Paul II noted that what makes “true dialogue possible” is the truth of Hinduism. Christians must hold Hinduism, not only Hindu people, in genuine respect because of “the action of the Spirit in man.”³³

On 13 April 1986 the Pope made a historic visit to the Synagogue of Rome. On 27 October of the same year he welcomed in Assisi religious leaders, both Christians and people of other religions, whom he had invited to come together to pray for peace in the world. This Day of Prayer in Assisi was a turning point in the history of humanity. After Assisi, the situation of dialogue is completely new: a type of interreligious encounter has been officially inaugurated. As people become conscious of the growing religious plurality of today’s world, so the necessity is recognized of engaging in relations which cross religious boundaries. Pope John Paul linked this extraordinary day of prayer especially to *Nostra Aetate* and the commitment of the Catholic Church to interreligious dialogue. He repeated the invitation to Assisi, in January 1993 to pray for peace in Europe and particularly in the Balkans, and again in 2002 as a response to the events of 11 September 2001.

In an inspiring speech made by Pope John Paul II at an Inter-religious Meeting at the Pontifical Institute, Notre Dame, Jerusalem in the year 2000, he said that religion must be genuinely centered on God, and that our first religious duty is adorations, praise and thanksgiving. This is seen in the opening sura of the Koran: “Praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe” (Koran 1:1). In various Biblical verses and especially in the psalms, we hear the universal song of praise: “Let everything that breathes give praise to the Lord! Alleluia!” (Psalms 150:6). In Hinduism, the Vishnu Sloka is:

*Kaayena Vaachaa Manasendriyairvaa
Buddhyaatmanaa Vaa Prakriteh Svabhaavaatah
Karomi Yadhyadh Sakalam Parasmai
Naaraayanaayeti Samarpayaami*

The literal meaning of the mantra is: “I offer everything to Lord Vishnu (Narayana); whatever I do with my body, words, mind, limbs, intellect or my inner self whether intentionally or unintentionally. I bow to the great lord, Vishnu”.³⁴

The call to acknowledge the Creator of the universe is essential in ensuring the well-being of individuals and the proper development of society. This authentic devotion to God also involves love of our brothers and sisters, which involves an attitude of respect and compassion, gestures of solidarity, cooperation in service to the common good.³⁵ Thus,

the promotion of justice and peace does not lie outside the field of religion, but is actually one of its essential elements.

“The Church encourages and fosters interreligious dialogue not only between herself and other religious traditions, but even among these religious traditions themselves. This is one way in which she fulfills her role as “sacrament, that is, sign and instrument of communion with God and unity among all people” (LG 1). She is invited by the Spirit to encourage all institutions and movements to meet, to enter into collaboration and to purify themselves in order to promote truth, and to live in holiness, justice, love and peace – dimensions of that kingdom which, at the end of time, Christ will hand over to his Father (cf. 1 Co 15:24).³⁶

“Interreligious dialogue is a part of the Church’s evangelizing mission”.³⁷ The encyclical *Redemptor Missio* beautifully explains that “dialogue does not originate from tactical concerns or self-interest, but is an activity with its own guiding principles, requirements and dignity. It is demanded by deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where he wills.³⁸ Through dialogue, the Church seeks to uncover the ‘seeds of the Word,’³⁹ a ‘ray of that truth which enlightens all men’;⁴⁰ these are found in individuals and in the religious traditions of mankind. Dialogue is based on hope and love, and will bear fruit in the Spirit”.⁴¹

A Further step in Dialogue: Work together in the service of all

In examining the question of dialogue between religions, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed that “as we grow in understanding of one another, we see that we share an esteem for ethical values, discernible to human reason, which are revered by all peoples of goodwill. The world begs for a common witness to these values. The Pope urged all religious people to view dialogue not only as a means of enhancing mutual understanding, but also as a way of serving society at large”. He praised the “growing interest among governments to sponsor programmes intended to promote inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue”, but appealed to people to find practical ways to implement strategies for advancing peace”.⁴²

The Purpose of Dialogue is to discover the Truth⁴³

Pope Benedict XVI clearly outlines the broader purpose of dialogue. He said that religious belief presupposes truth. “The one who believes is the one who seeks truth and lives by it. Although the medium by which we understand the discovery and communication of truth differs in part from religion to religion, we should not be deterred in our efforts to bear witness to truth’s power. The Pope was convinced that together all religions can proclaim

that God exists and can be known, that the earth is his creation, that we are his creatures, and that he calls every man and woman to a way of life that respects his design for the world... Fostering the will to be obedient to the truth in fact broadens our concept of reason and its scope of application, and makes possible the genuine dialogue of cultures and religions so urgently needed today”.⁴⁴

The main aim of dialogue: Helping people of different religions to live together in Peace and Harmony. By choosing to bear witness to the moral truths and ethical values that are held in common by everyone, religious groups will certainly exert a positive influence on the wider culture, and inspire people to strengthen the ties of solidarity.⁴⁵ Working for dialogue is no easy task. It means educating oneself about the other religions, overcoming prejudices, creating trust. It means strengthening bonds of friendship and collaboration. It means to forget the past, to make a sincere effort to achieve mutual understanding, and to work together to “preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values”.⁴⁶ Not everything is black and white. There can be harm and injuries done to both the parties. The acknowledgement of wrongs done, of injustices, of atrocities, is an important step to reconciliation. This is essential if peace is to be established among peoples.⁴⁷ There can be no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness. In the words of Pope Paul VI: “We must meet as pilgrims who have set out to find God in human hearts. Person must meet person, nation must meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God. In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build the common future of the human race. It must be built on a common love that embraces all and has its roots in God who is love”.

Conclusion: Humanity needs Peace

It is my hope and conviction that we are indeed entering a new era of inter-religious dialogue. We need to form closer ties among all believers to create a more just and peaceful world.

I would like to repeat the words Pope John Paul II chanted at Assisi⁴⁸:

Violence never again! War never again! Terrorism never again! In God's name, may all religions bring upon earth justice and peace, forgiveness, life and love!

Peace (Shanti in the Indian Scriptures) is fundamental to the Hindu way and view of life. The Hindus invoke peace that envelops the whole universe. They pray, “May peace be unto the Heavens! May peace be unto the Space! May peace be unto the Earth! Peace be unto the Waters! Peace be unto the Plants! Peace be unto the trees! Peace be to all the

Gods! Peace be to Brahman! May peace envelop all! Peace verily peace! May peace embrace me!”.⁴⁹

The Holy Qur'an also speaks highly of peace that comes from faith. “He it is who sent down peace of reassurance into the hearts of the believers, that they might add faith to their faith”.⁵⁰ In Islam, beneficence and mercy (Rahman and Rahim in the Qur'an) are the main attributes of God.⁵¹

For Christians, peace is that “magnificent gift of God: as St. Augustine says, ‘even understood as one of the fleeting things of earth, no sweeter word is heard, no more desirable wish is longed for, and no better discovery can be made than this gift’”.⁵² With such profound similarities seen in our great religious traditions, let us unite ourselves and work together for peace in our country and city.

Representatives of many religions went on pilgrimage to Assisi to ask God in prayer for the gift of peace. May I conclude with a prayer for peace, to open our human hearts to the inroads of God's power to renew all things⁵³:

Let us pray for justice, for a right-ordering of relations within and among nations and peoples.

Let us pray for freedom, especially for the religious freedom that is a basic human and civil right of every individual.

Let us pray God's forgiveness, and to implore the courage to forgive those who have trespassed against us.

Let us ask Almighty God - in the beautiful phrase attributed to Saint Francis himself - *to make each of us a channel of his peace.*

(Footnotes)

- 1 Krishna Kumar, “Religious Fundamentalism in India and Beyond” in *Parameters*, Autumn 2002, p. 17.
- 2 G8 Summit 2009. Official Website: <http://www.g8italia2009.it/G8>. It is estimated that half the world population will be living in areas with a water shortage by 2030. The FAO's latest estimates indicate that the food price crisis has increased the number of people lacking food security to over 75 million.
- 3 Pope John Paul II, “Monastic Interreligious Dialogue” at the Presidential Palace in Carthage on 14 April 1996. Bulletin 55, May 1996.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Pope John Paul II, *Message on World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2000.
- 6 Census of India, 2001.

- 7 Pope John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, no. 6.
- 8 Pope John Paul II, *Centisimus Annus*, no. 60.
- 9 *Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 513.
- 10 See John Paul II, Message for World Day of Peace, 1 January 2002, no. 12.
- 11 India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches September 1953 to August 1957*, vol. 3 (Delhi, 1950), pp. 36-7.
- 12 S.D. Muni, "Ethnic conflict, federalism, and democracy in India" in *Ethnicity and power in the contemporary world*, eds. Kumar Rupesinghe and Valery A. Tishkov. *United Nations University Press*, 1996.
- 13 Santosh Saha and Thomas Carr, eds. *Religious Fundamentalism in Developing Countries*, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 2001.
- 14 CBCI Statement, New Delhi, January 07, 2009.
- 15 <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=16129>
- 16 <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=16129>
- 17 Cardinal Francis Arinze, Reflections on the Day of Prayer at Assisi, 24 January 2002.
- 18 *Nostra Aetate* 2; *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 53; *Redemptor Missio* 55; *Ecclesia in Asia* 31
- 19 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Missio*, No. 52.
- 20 Cardinal Ivan Dias, *A Dialogue of Cultures - Cultural Issues in Mission*. Consultation of Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, Mumbai, March 7-9, 2000.
- 21 John Paul II, *Redemptor Missio*, no. 52. See Footnote no. 86. Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* (October 16, 1979), 53: AAS 71 (1979), 1320; Encyclical Epistle *Slavorum Apostoli* (June 2, 1985), 21: AAS 77 (1985), 802f.
- 22 John Paul II, *Redemptor Missio*, no. 52. See Footnote no. 87. Cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 20: *loc. cit.*, 18f. 23 Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 55. We understand that the phrase the Pope used for 'this dialogue' is interreligious dialogue'.
- 24 See UCAN news: Gerard O'Connell, "Cardinal Tauran applauds Japan Church for interreligious dialogue": August 14 2009.
- 25 Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Delegates of Other Churches and Ecclesial Communities and of Other Religious Traditions, 25 April 2005.
- 26 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Footnote 67: Cf. St. Justin, *I Apologia*, 46, 1-4; *II Apologia*, 7 (8), 1-4; 10, 1-3; 13, 3-4; *Florilegium Patristicum*, II, Bonn 1911 2, pp. 81, 125, 129, 133; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, I, 19, 91 and 94: *Sources Chrétiennes*, 30, pp. 117-118; 119-120; Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad Gentes*, 11: AAS 58 (1966) 960; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 17: AAS 57 (1965) 21.
- 27 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 11.
- 28 *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church from the Second Vatican Council to John Paul II (1963-2005)*, edited by Francesco Gioia (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), p. 842.
- 29 Vatican II, *Nostra Aetate*, no. 3.
- 30 Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 7 June 2008.
- 31 cf. *Ad Gentes*, 2-5; *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 26, and Dialogue and Mission, 9.
- 32 "Today as a pilgrim of peace, I have come here to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi, hero of humanity." Pope John Paul II said in praise of the Hindu leader. "Pope John Paul II had to be virtually shaken up and told by his secretary that he was praying too long," said the then **Archbishop Oswald Gracías** (now **Cardinal Gracías**). "He was lost in prayer. It showed how much he gelled with the Mahatma's thoughts".
- 33 Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963– 1995), ed. Francesco Gioia (Boston: Pauline, 1994) no. 507. See also James Fredericks, "The Catholic Church and other Religious Paths: Rejecting nothing that is True and Holy" in *Theological Studies* 64 (2003), p. 234.

- 34 Lord Vishnu is considered as the chief god in Hindu religion and Indian mythology. Vishnu, the preserver, forms the part of trinity gods. Vishnu Slokas form the part of prayers offered to the lord.
- 35 Pope John Paul II, Interreligious Meeting at the Pontifical Institute, Notre Dame, Jerusalem, 23 March 2000.
- 36 Dialogue and Proclamation, no. 80.
- 37 *Redemptor Missio*, no. 55.
- 38 Cf. Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 12: *loc. cit.*, 279.
- 39 Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad Gentes*, 11, 15.
- 40 Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration on the Church's Relation to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, 2.
- 41 Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptor Missio*, no. 56.
- 42 Pope Benedict XVI, "Discovering Truth: Purpose of Inter-religious Dialogue", 18 April 2008, Vatican Information Service.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI during his meeting with organizations for inter-religious dialogue, Holy Land, 11 May 2009.
- 45 See Pope Benedict XVI's address at his meeting with representatives of other religions at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, Washington D.C. on 17 April 2008.
- 46 Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate*, no. 3.
- 47 Abp. M. Fitzgerald, The Promise of Interreligious Dialogue for a World in Conflict. 16 March 2006. Address delivered at Boston College as part of the conference, "In Our Time: Interreligious Relations in a Divided World".
- 48 Day of Prayer for Peace in the World, Assisi, 24 January 2002.
- 49 *Shukla Yajurveda* XXXVI.17
- 50 Qur'an 48:4
- 51 Krishna Kumar, "Religious Fundamentalism in India and Beyond" in *Parameters*, Autumn 2002.
- 52 Peace as a magnificent gift of God was used by Pope Benedict XV. See Encyclical *Pacem Dei Munus*: AAS 12 [1920], p. 209. And for St. Augustine, see *De Civitate Dei*, lib. XIX, c. x.1.
- 53 See John Paul II, Message for World Day of Peace, 1 January 2002, no. 15.